UNITED NATIONS

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.
GENERAL

CEDAW/C/SR.315
12 March 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Sixteenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 315th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 15 January 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. KHAN

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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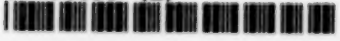

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 21 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued)

Statement by the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

1. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee's relationship with UNICEF was based on the fact that the latter's mandate was critically important for the empowerment of women. Women's human rights issues were closely associated with the rights of children. At the joint meeting of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, held in Cairo in November 1996, the participants had shared, for the first time, their experiences, problems and strategies, and common issues had emerged, exemplifying the need for closer cooperation between the two Committees. Following that meeting, she had made arrangements for a similar meeting with the UNICEF representative in her country, Bangladesh, which would take place in the near future. The complementarity between the two Conventions highlighted the need for a common platform, and the concerns of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women could be addressed more meaningfully with support from UNICEF.

2. Ms. BELLAMY (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund) said that much progress had been made over the past year in strengthening the working relationship between the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In January 1996, the UNICEF Executive Board had adopted a mission statement noting children's and women's rights as one of the areas for follow-up of the Fourth World Conference on Women. UNICEF was developing partnerships with countries and helping Governments use a rights-oriented approach to strengthen their actions in favour of children's and women's rights, since a focus on rights helped ensure the sustainability of the actions undertaken.

3. At their joint meeting in Cairo, the two Committees had recommended increased networking and cooperation between bodies of the United Nations system to promote women's and children's rights, dissemination of information, public awareness campaigns, facilitation of coalitions of non-governmental organizations and linkages with parliamentarians. In addition, the two Committees had agreed to share information on working methods and to join forces in encouraging countries to withdraw reservations to the Conventions and in working on common themes, particularly those concerning girls. The Committee on the Rights of the Child would step up its efforts to eliminate gender discrimination and to enhance women's status, while the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women would strengthen its focus on girls. Further key areas for cooperation had been explored at subsequent meetings between UNICEF and the chairpersons of the two Committees. Pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF was committed to the principle of non-discrimination and to the promotion of equal rights for women and girls.

4. Ms. CORTI said she hoped that further joint meetings of the two Committees would be held and that the Committee could become involved in some of the field programmes of UNICEF. In her country, Italy, UNICEF planned to hold a conference to discuss the two Conventions; that event would provide an opportunity to publicize the Conventions and the complementarity between them.

5. Ms. GONZÁLEZ MARTÍNEZ said that strengthened relations between the two Committees would yield significant benefits. She was pleased that UNICEF had instructed its country offices to establish or strengthen their contacts with government institutions, parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations. However, she suggested that those offices should also maintain relations with national mechanisms for women. Improved coordination between UNICEF and government institutions would prevent resources from being wasted through scattershot approaches. She hoped that UNICEF would continue to strengthen its activities, which were very important in Latin America and the Caribbean.

6. Ms. ESTRADA CASTILLO recalled that her country, Ecuador, had been the first to sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the third to ratify that Convention. Recently, the President of the Supreme Court of Justice had decided to implement a national programme to publicize the two Conventions over a two-year period. That initiative had been supported by the President and the National Congress of Ecuador, and she hoped that UNICEF would also support its implementation.

7. Ms. AOUIJ said that emphasizing the linkages and complementarity between the two Conventions was a good strategy. Since many countries embraced the idea of children's rights more readily than that of women's rights, the association between the two would help to bring women's rights issues to the fore. UNICEF could contribute greatly to that effort by coordinating its work with that of national women's rights groups.

8. Ms. BARE said that the consolidation of the relationship between UNICEF and the Committee would be of particular value in spreading awareness of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In her country, Zimbabwe, UNICEF was translating the Convention into the vernacular; she hoped that UNICEF would then help to publicize the text of the Convention, especially in rural areas. The next step for UNICEF should be to incorporate the teaching of children's rights into school curricula. Subsequently, those actions could be reproduced in neighbouring countries.

9. Ms. JAVATE DE DIOS said that cooperation between the two Committees would result in the identification of issues which were critically important to both women and men. In her country, the Philippines, research on violence against women had revealed that girls were often affected by that phenomenon. The two Committees could enrich each other's work by identifying priorities together.

10. Ms. BELLAMY (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund) said that the Fund's relationship with the Committee was evolving as its work in the area of children's rights evolved. Since the majority of States had already ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF had shifted its emphasis from the Convention's ratification to its implementation. As UNICEF was a development-oriented agency, it must address the rights of women as key actors

in the development process. Thus, the Fund's renewed emphasis on women's rights sprang not from a directive issued by its Headquarters, but from the natural relationship between the well-being of children and that of women. Although the Fund's partnership with Governments, at both the national and decentralized levels, remained very important, UNICEF was currently increasing its contacts and activities with civil society, non-governmental organizations and other actors. For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, it was cooperating with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in facilitating the establishment of networks of non-governmental organizations, as part of the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. By emphasizing their complementarity, UNICEF and the Committee would not only avoid duplication of effort, but would also learn a great deal from each other.

Statement by the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

11. The CHAIRPERSON recalled that at the International Conference on Population and Development, Ms. Corti, the then Chairperson of the Committee, had raised the possibility of having a meeting between the Committee and UNFPA to consider issues relevant to the Committee and other human rights treaty bodies. As a result, the round-table meeting of human rights treaty bodies on human rights approaches to reproductive and sexual health and rights had been held in December 1996 at Glen Cove, New York. At the meeting, members of the Committee had made a number of proposals for enhanced cooperation between the Committee and UNFPA.

12. Ms. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that the cooperation between UNFPA and the Committee was of immense value to UNFPA and to women throughout the world. The Committee's work in identifying and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women was of crucial importance; its efforts to promote women's right to health, and to reproductive health in particular, had helped lay the basis for women's empowerment.

13. Although the equal rights of women and men had been recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, no serious attention had been paid to the adverse effects of gender discrimination on women's health until the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The World Conference on Human Rights had emphasized the need to integrate women's rights into all human rights instruments and their implementation at all levels; both the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women had reiterated that principle, and affirmed that women's health issues, including those related to reproduction and sexuality, were human rights concerns. The Fourth World Conference on Women had explicitly included women's right to make their own decisions about sexuality. The world community now accepted that States were responsible for respecting and protecting reproductive and sexual rights, as an indispensable element in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. Those goals were essential conditions for achieving sustainable development.

14. In order to hold Governments legally accountable for neglecting or violating reproductive rights, the understandings reached at the global conferences needed to be fully integrated into the treaty implementation and

monitoring process. That had been one of the goals of the round-table meeting of human rights treaty bodies on human rights approaches to reproductive and sexual rights sponsored by UNFPA, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women. A major aim had been to strengthen working relations among United Nations organizations, the human rights system and non-governmental organizations, leading to better integration of gender concerns within the human rights system and of human rights perspectives within United Nations operations. It was the first time that experts from all six human rights treaty bodies, along with representatives of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, had been brought together to address a thematic issue.

15. The round-table meeting had made some 30 recommendations. UNFPA had had a meeting with the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Centre for Human Rights to discuss future follow-up. It was also working with other specialized agencies to develop indicators for monitoring progress towards the goals set; that work could be coordinated with the standard-setting activities of the Committee and other human rights treaty bodies.

16. Another priority was to identify the kinds of information on women's health which States should include in their reports. The round-table meeting had urged the treaty bodies to re-examine their guidelines and general criteria for considering States' reports in order to integrate women's health issues more fully, and had recommended that the annual meeting of chairpersons of treaty bodies should devote one day to consideration of a thematic issue. United Nations agencies and other organizations had been urged to support the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the treaty monitoring implementation process and assist States in implementing the recommendations of treaty bodies, while non-governmental organizations had been urged to assist treaty bodies in developing recommendations and guidelines for the reporting process. UNFPA would invite Committee experts to a meeting on 22 January 1997 to discuss follow-up activities to the round-table meeting recommendations.

17. UNFPA was in favour of an optional protocol to the Convention which would increase accountability, enable members of civil society to report violations, and obligate States to react if violations were found. Every effort should be made to strengthen the Convention by encouraging countries which had not yet done so to ratify the Convention, or to remove their reservations.

18. Since the global conferences, many countries had taken important first steps to implement the reproductive rights agenda. Yet the right to reproductive and sexual health was still far from realization in many countries. Over 120 million women who wanted to limit or space their pregnancies were still without the means to do so, and an estimated 25 million underwent unsafe abortions each year. Many lives could be saved by relatively low-cost improvements in reproductive health care. Over 120 million women had undergone some form of genital mutilation. Many adolescents were still denied access to reproductive health information and services, and thousands of women refugees and others involved in emergency situations were being deprived of their reproductive rights.

19. The Convention and other human rights instruments were critical tools in persuading Governments and the international community to promote and protect the right to reproductive and sexual health. The human rights treaty process was also critical in creating an international standard that transcended culture, traditions and societal norms; while those were important forces which bound society together, they could not force women into a subordinate role, damage their health and minimize their contributions to the family, the community and the nation.

20. Ms. CORTI said that she welcomed the cooperation between the Committee and UNFPA. The round-table meeting had been a first attempt to bring everyone together and consider how to promote the right to reproductive and sexual health, which was a crucial human right. The discussions and action would benefit millions of women.

21. Ms. SHALEV said that the round-table meeting had provided a valuable opportunity to meet field-level staff, and had enhanced her understanding of the Committee's monitoring role. She looked forward to the follow-up to the round-table meeting.

22. Ms. ABAKA said that the round-table meeting had been an exceptional occasion not only for the Committee but also for the other treaty bodies, which had realized for the first time that they could use their conventions and treaties to benefit women. She endorsed the need for advocacy in the field: even after the global conferences, the need to promote women's reproductive health and rights had not been recognized at the national level. UNFPA field officers could do much in that respect, along with non-governmental organizations.

23. Ms. SADIK (Executive Director, UNFPA) said that UNFPA had drawn on the Convention in drafting the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Women's issues must be mainstreamed, and could not simply be add-ons to national programmes. Policy-makers talked about women's issues at international conferences and did nothing at home. It was not enough to change laws; discrimination and violence against women had to become socially unacceptable.

24. Advocacy training had been provided to all UNFPA field staff in 1996. Advocacy had to be non-confrontational, and, in order to allay the concerns of men, should concentrate on improving the status of both men and women. In the case of reproductive health, the control of women's fertility was one way of controlling women; yet women were not well protected because they did not have access to proper nutrition and health care during pregnancy and lactation. That issue would be taken up at the January meeting.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Initial report of Slovenia (continued) (CEDAW/C/SVN/1)

25. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Kozmik (Slovenia) took a place at the Committee table.

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Article 6

26. Ms. BUSTELO GARCÍA DEL REAL noted the report's acknowledgement that the data it contained did not reflect the current situation with respect to the implementation of article 6, asked whether any government studies had been done on the number and situation of prostitutes in Slovenia and how they were protected from violence, exploitation and other violations of their rights. It was important to ascertain not only what measures the Government had taken, but also whether the women themselves felt that their rights under the Convention were respected. She wondered whether migrant women were informed of the danger posed by international networks trafficking in women, whether any migrant women had fallen prey to such networks and, if so, what measures the Government had taken to protect their rights. Lastly, she asked whether government offices for women cooperated with the police in that area, since prostitution was an underground activity about which the police were usually best informed.

27. With respect to article 4, she asked whether the Convention had the force of law in Slovenia for women belonging to minority groups and whether the rights of those women under the Convention were respected.

28. Ms. GONZÁLEZ MARTÍNEZ said that she shared those concerns, and asked whether Slovenia had considered the possibility of regulating the "sexual services" referred to in its report. With respect to the reference to Eastern European nightclub performers, she asked whether they were presumed to be prostitutes and, if so, what their immigration status was in Slovenia. If the provision of "sexual services" on a voluntary basis was considered an ordinary economic activity, the Government should regulate it and should take steps to ensure that it did not involve criminal activities such as trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution.

29. The CHAIRPERSON said that the overall environment for the enhancement of women's status in Slovenia was positive, since Slovenia had ratified the Convention without reservations and Slovenian women enjoyed the benefits of a good child-care system and universal literacy. However, the report had not clarified the de facto situation of women in Slovenia's increasingly urban society, where pornography was no longer banned and prostitution seemed to be increasing. Moreover, the report did not deal adequately with the topics of violence against women and women in minority communities.

Article 7

30. Ms. ESTRADA CASTILLO recalled that under the previous regime in Slovenia, the demands for women's rights had been subsumed under the general demand for political rights of the population at large. Under the new system, the situation had improved, with the establishment of organizations entirely devoted to women's issues, and yet women's participation and influence in such bodies had declined dramatically. The causes of that setback needed clarification. The Government should specify whether programmes were being developed to make women aware of the need for political action. It would also be interesting to learn whether the political parties supported women once they attained political office and whether they educated women about their political rights.

31. Ms. CORTI, recalling the Slovenian representative's reference to "genuine democracy", said that in the reporting State, as in other countries, democracy was deficient. The Constitution guaranteed equality, but political participation was lacking. The Slovenian representative had mentioned the decline in the number of women elected to municipal office in the recent elections. In contrast, during the period when Slovenia had been part of the Yugoslav federation, women had been fully represented in political life at both the national and international levels. While the number of non-governmental women's organizations in various fields was impressive those organizations did not appear to be concerned with strategies for electing more women to Parliament.

32. Ms. CARTWRIGHT said that she shared the concerns expressed regarding the decline in the number of women elected to municipal office. It also appeared that there were no women members of the Constitutional Court. Additional information should be provided on how judges were appointed and whether special efforts were being made to ensure that an adequate number of women qualified for and were appointed to such posts. It would also be interesting to learn whether Slovenia was experiencing the same difficulties as other countries in retaining women at senior levels of the legal profession from whose ranks judicial appointees could be drawn and what, if anything, was being done to prevent such women from leaving that profession.

33. Ms. ACAR noted that, according to the report, women occupied a small number of elected positions as opposed to appointed positions, and that the number of women elected chairpersons of municipal communities had declined, particularly in the more developed areas of the country. Competitive politics appeared to have a negative effect on women's participation; she would appreciate additional information on the electoral system and on whether there were any structural factors built into it which worked against such participation. Further details should be provided on the political parties which had implemented quotas and on their chances of attaining power.

34. In connection with article 2, it had been stated that the recent structural adjustments had revitalized patriarchal attitudes. In societies where the State ideology promoted gender equality, the result was often complacency or even reaction on the part of women. In such cases, policies and programmes were needed to raise women's awareness of gender issues. She urged the Government to make more systematic efforts to combat the resurgence of patriarchal attitudes.

35. Ms. AOUIJ, noting that the first paragraph of the section of the report dealing with article 7 of the Convention indicated that equality between men and women was not emphasized in individual laws, said that the principle of equality must be enshrined in the written law so that it could not easily be called into question by any regime. Law was the first step in a process leading to changes in behaviour which would enable society to evolve towards greater equality.

36. The Government should indicate whether and how the Committee for Women's Policies and the Office for Women's Policies coordinated their efforts, and whether they had branches in rural areas. Further details on their role in the government hierarchy would be welcome.

37. She failed to understand why the women's committees of the political parties had so little influence, as those parties should be eager to obtain women's votes and should thus encourage their involvement in political life. She urged the Government to take steps to increase women's representation in Parliament.

38. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING asked whether the data concerning the representation of women in courts of law referred to judges. It would be useful to learn whether anything was being done to retain women in the judiciary. While the number of women in public administration was impressive and was probably attributable to the high standard of education under the socialist regime, affirmative action was needed to ensure that younger women were being promoted. Such measures did not have to be quotas; they could involve numerical goals, timetables, aggressive recruitment of younger women, mentoring by both senior women and men, and so on. What was important was that the performance of the upper echelons of the public administration should be linked to whether they were promoting women to higher positions.

39. With regard to the results of the recent elections, it was unclear why women were not entering politics in larger numbers. One possible explanation was that under the socialist system a number of slots had been reserved for women so that they had not had to compete. The factors impeding women's participation, such as sexual stereotypes, the double workload, women's economic status in a changing economy, the lack of child care, the lack of political education, and so on, should be clarified. It would also be useful to learn whether research had been done on voting behaviour and on whether women voted for female candidates.

40. She urged the Government to ensure that non-governmental women's organizations provided training in competitive politics, for, without affirmative action, women's participation would not exceed 10 per cent, and there would be no real democracy. In her country, Germany, even the conservative parties had seen the need for quotas.

41. The CHAIRPERSON said that she was concerned mainly at the low level of participation by women in politics at the decision-making level. She urged the Government to find ways to implement article 4 of the Convention.

42. She would be grateful for additional information on how coordination among the various agencies was ensured and whether they had overlapping functions.

Article 8

43. Ms. JAVATE DE DIOS, noting that Slovenia had only one woman ambassador, asked whether career diplomats received training in human rights and international law, and, if so, whether they were aware of the Convention and of the need to promote it as part of foreign policy.

Article 10

44. Ms. CORTI, noting the Government's achievements in the educational sphere, said that she would welcome information on whether human rights education was

provided and, if so, in which schools and courses. It would also be useful to learn whether the Convention was included in the curriculum. It was difficult to understand the decrease in the number of women in post-graduate studies, given the high number of female university students.

45. Ms. FERRER GÓMEZ said that, according to the report, the differences between the sexes throughout the educational system reflected positive discrimination in favour of girls. She would be grateful for information on the subjects taught in the secondary school for internal affairs and on why no girls were enrolled in it. Clarification should be provided concerning the obstacles to equal job opportunities for women in such fields as mining, maritime sciences, metallurgy, construction engineering and traffic and transport studies, as mentioned in paragraph (b), third subparagraph, of the section of the report dealing with article 10.

46. Among the obstacles to women's obtaining further education were household and family responsibilities. The Government should indicate whether any efforts were being made to promote shared responsibilities between men and women within marriage so that women could have equal access to education at all levels.

47. Ms. KIM asked whether "positive discrimination towards girls" meant that the schools were segregated. She would also appreciate knowing whether all the schools were coeducational except the secondary school for internal affairs. It was unclear why the number of women in technical and safety colleges was decreasing, while on the other hand, a large number of women were enrolled in law.

48. Ms. AOUIJ said that she, too, failed to understand why women were not admitted to the secondary school for internal affairs.

49. With regard to the vocational training scholarships granted by companies to future employees, there was a risk that girls might be arbitrarily excluded. In a transitional economy, finding and keeping a job became more difficult for women. The Government should adopt fiscal measures to encourage scholarships, and should demand that companies award scholarships equally to men and women.

50. Ms. JAVATE DE DIOS noted that, according to the report, illiteracy was almost non-existent in Slovenia, so that there were practically no illiterate women. Nevertheless, despite the Government's efforts, women were clustered in traditional fields; there was a big gap between men and women in engineering and computer science, professions which were likely to be much in demand. The gap in training would have major implications for women's future earning power and might result in female unemployment.

51. With regard to the effort to introduce gender-sensitive language into curricula and textbooks, the Government should be more specific about whether women's rights were included in school curricula.

52. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that she would appreciate additional information on whether vocational training was provided only in schools or also by enterprises, and whether scholarships were needed. It would also be useful to learn what percentage of girls were enrolled in vocational training in both

schools and enterprises, and what percentage of girls, as opposed to boys, were offered jobs after completing the training. The Government should endeavour to educate career counsellors to steer young women into non-traditional fields.

53. The report and the oral presentation had not mentioned women's studies. The Government should indicate whether there were professorships in that field. She would also appreciate information on whether the Office for Women's Policies had a budget for consciousness-raising activities.

54. Additional age-segregated data on children's attendance at preschools and kindergartens would be welcome. She also wished to know whether children spent a full day or half a day in school.

Article 11

55. Ms. FERRER GÓMEZ inquired about the conditions that had led to growing unemployment for women and what the Office of Women's Policies had done to address the problem. She requested further explanation of discrimination against women of child-bearing age because of their potential family responsibilities.

56. Ms. ACAR said that, in many countries making the transition to a market economy, women were coping with unemployment and attempting to provide for their families by entering the informal sector. She wondered to what extent so-called "suitcase trading" had become a feminized occupation, whether any statistics were available on women's economic activity in the informal sector, and what State policy and strategies had been devised to integrate that sector into the formal economy.

57. Ms. BARE asked for a clearer definition of temporary employment, its usual duration and whether any job security and benefits were provided for temporary workers, since such employment was often a disguised form of exploitation. It would be interesting to learn whether the Office of Women's Policies had considered any programmes to train women for self-employment and whether the concept of job-sharing, widely used in other European countries, had been introduced. She would also like to know what role trade unions played in retraining workers.

58. Slovenia had recently ratified ILO Convention No. 156; she therefore wondered whether the Law on Labour Relations recognized discrimination against women of child-bearing age, and whether it would be amended to conform to the ILO Convention.

59. Finally, if 50 per cent day care coverage was not considered adequate, an explanation of any constraints on expansion of that service would be helpful.

60. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING asked if there was any specific legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment, and if not, whether there were any plans to introduce such legislation. She would welcome more information on legislation concerning equal pay for work of equal value, affirmative action programmes and the existence of any Government programmes for first-time job seekers. National statistics concerning work performed in the home and part-

time work would also be helpful. Finally, the views of trade unions on those subjects would be very interesting to hear.

61. Ms. RYEL, noting that there was no requirement that announcements of job vacancies must be gender-neutral, wondered whether any analysis of that policy had been conducted. She was concerned that women who had entered a non-traditional field of education might become discouraged when seeking employment in those fields if job advertisements appeared to be aimed only at men. She would also welcome further discussion on the concept of equal pay for work of equal value as it was understood in Slovenia.

62. With regard to pensions, she would like to learn why women could retire five years earlier than men and the effect of earlier retirement on their pension benefits. It would also be interesting to know if fathers were afforded the same opportunity to take parental leave as mothers.

Article 12

63. Ms. GONZÁLEZ MARTÍNEZ said that the very high rate of abortion - over 50 per cent of the number of live births - and the large number of couples not using any form of contraception were a cause for concern. The highest rate of abortion was among younger women, and she wondered whether any Government-sponsored sex education or contraceptive education programmes existed.

64. Ms. ABAKA commended the Government of Slovenia for including the right to abortion among constitutional guarantees. It appeared to her, however, that in the context of that liberal legal framework, abortion was being used as contraception. She asked whether women were counselled before the procedure about the consequences, especially of repeated abortions, and how often a woman could have the procedure within a specific period. Statistics on the mortality rate from complications from abortion and the major causes of maternal mortality would be welcome. It seemed that little emphasis was placed on family planning, and she would like to know why condoms were not distributed free of charge, especially in the light of the spread of HIV/AIDS.

65. With regard to the national health insurance scheme, she would like to know what happened if an individual was unable to pay the maximum 15 per cent share of the full price of medical fees. It would be helpful to learn if members of the medical profession were receiving human rights education, especially training in recognizing cases of domestic violence.

66. Ms. SHALEV said that, in order to understand the effect of the transition to a market economy on the public health insurance scheme, statistics on the public and private national expenditures on health for 1992 and 1996 were needed. She requested further explanation of the two categories of farm workers mentioned, the difference between compulsory and voluntary insurance, and whether such vulnerable groups as migrants and refugees were entitled to coverage.

67. With regard to the recent strike by doctors and dentists, she wondered whether those occupations had become feminized in recent years, and if so, the reasons behind the strike.

68. Concerning occupational health, she asked what protection from reproductive hazards was provided to men, and whether there were any gender-disaggregated data on occupational health hazards. She would like to hear more about any efforts to train primary health care providers to identify domestic violence, and whether formal health education programmes in the schools covered domestic violence, reproductive health and male responsibility for sexual behaviour.

69. She commended the Pap smear policy, which had led to a significant reduction in cervical cancer, and inquired about the Government policy on mammograms. Gender-disaggregated data and age-related data on breast cancer and cardiovascular disease would be helpful. Regarding infertility, she would like to learn what treatments were covered and what percentage of public health spending was allocated to infertility compared to abortion and contraception. The report had not mentioned what happened if a woman sought an abortion after the tenth week of pregnancy. She also wondered whether any medical research on women's health issues was being conducted and whether women participated in clinical trials.

70. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING asked whether a women could benefit from her husband's pension plan, and vice versa, whether the pension system was based on individual accomplishments or family status, and to what extent maternity and child care leave were recognized in the pension system.

Article 14

71. Ms. BARE asked what impact farming women's initiatives (aktive) had had in preparing women to participate in local decision-making bodies, such as municipalities. It was indicated in the report that 57.3 per cent of the rural population had little or no access to facilities; she asked what percentage of that was a deficiency in child care, health and education. It was commendable that there was no illiteracy among rural women.

72. Ms. OUEDRAOGO said that the report referred to training programmes for women farmers in the field of domestic science; elsewhere in the report, women's domestic load was referred to as a problem. It might be better to focus on strategies to reduce the domestic load.

73. The study entitled "The Quality of Life" showed sharp disparities between rural and urban areas; in accordance with the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, it must be ensured that increased productivity by rural women led to increased income for them. At the same time, more information needed to be provided about the de facto situation of rural women, including statistics on their economic activity and on access to credit.

74. Ms. Kozmik (Slovenia) withdrew.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

75. The CHAIRPERSON said that the initial report of Zaire had originally been scheduled for consideration at the current session; because of a breakdown of communications with Kinshasa, however, the Government of Zaire had not informed the Secretariat that it was ready to present its report, and as a result, the

initial report of Zaire had not been included in the agenda. Since a delegation had arrived from Zaire, she suggested that the Committee should request the representative of Zaire to make an exceptional report on the situation of women in Zaire on the clear understanding that the regular report of Zaire would be taken up at a future session.

76. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.